

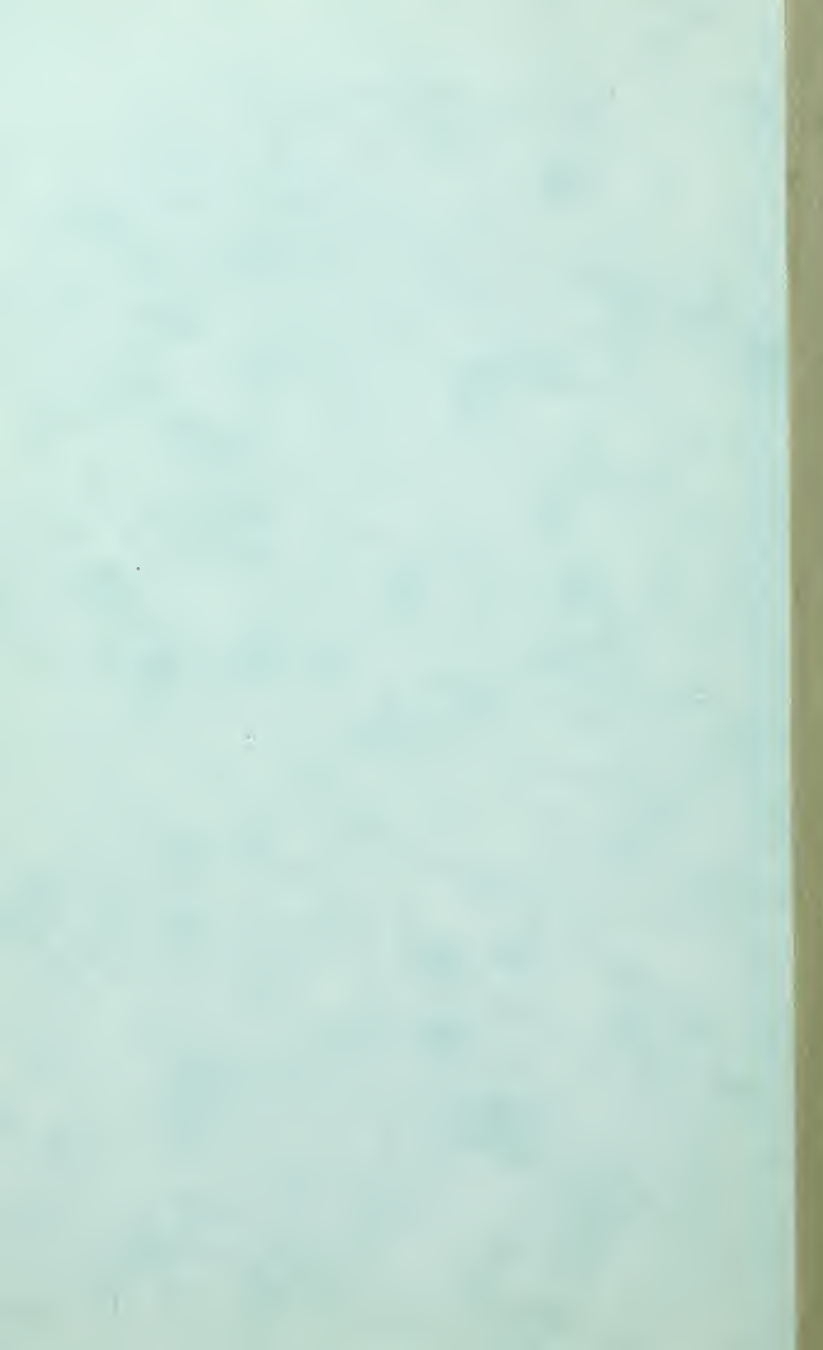


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Camp Pottsgrove

September 18th to 26th, 1777

General Washington
with his Continental
Army at Fagleysville,
New Hanover Town-
ship, Montgomery
County, Pennsylvania



1903

BENJAMIN BERTOLET

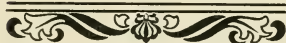
Philadelphia



Camp Pottsgrove

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1903

BENJAMIN BERTOLET

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CAMP POTTS GROVE AT FAGLEYSVILLE, PA.

BACK OF THE CROOKED HILLS.

A NEW REVELATION ON CAMP POTTS GROVE IN NEW HANOVER BY
FINDING NOTES IN A JOURNAL AND ORDERLY BOOK.

Two years ago the author issued a paper under the title "The Missing Link of Camp Pottsgrove, September 19th to 26th, 1777," which was read before the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Pa., by my son Walter B. Bertolet, on February 22d, 1901, based principally on tradition, and what was handed down by the different families and statements by old respectable citizens who lived and were raised in the neighborhood, and the Revolutionary relics found on the farms named.

It affords the writer great pleasure to say that he is able to add another day to the length of the encampment at Camp Pottsgrove and write September 18th, instead of the 19th, 1777.

"Washington's Army near the County of Berks," by M. S. Montgomery Esq., of Reading, Pa. He says the nearest point to Berks County that he reached was on September 21st, 1777, when he and his army were in Pottsgrove Township about four miles southeast of Pottstown. The British having moved after him up the west side of the Schuylkill river. He remained there until the 26th of September, 1777. Anyone who is familiar with this location would say that must be at the Crooked Hills, now Sanatoga.

"In Muhlenberg's Journal" under the date of September 19th, 1777, he says: "The army marched south-

ward from Parker's Ford, on the east side of the Schuylkill river, by way of the Trappe, a village on the Reading road 25 miles from Philadelphia, as far as the Perkiomen creek, where it encamped. His Excellency, George Washington, was with the army in person, and marched past here (Trappe) to the Perkiomen creek.

"The procession lasted the whole night, and we had numerous visits from officers wet breast high, who had to march in that condition the whole night. On the 21st, the enemy having moved rapidly up the road on the west side of the Schuylkill toward Reading, Washington marched his troops to within four miles of Pottsgrove, now Pottstown."

On September 18th, 1777, Washington writes from Warwick Furnace to General Wayne: "The army here is so much fatigued that it is impossible I should move them this afternoon."

On September 19th, Washington writes from Parker's Ford to the President of Congress; "I am now repassing the Schuylkill at Parker's Ford with the main body of the army, which will be over in an hour or two, though it is deep and rapid. As soon as the troops have crossed the river, I shall march them as expeditiously as possible towards Flatland's, Swede's, and other fords, where it is most probable the enemy will attempt to pass.

In Marshall's "Life of Washington," we are told that on the 19th day of September, 1777, Washington and his army encamped on both sides of the Perkiomen creek, in Providence Township, and that the camp extended from the Trappe to lower end of Evansburg and Providence Hill.

I am more than pleased to be able to lay before the public the undeniable fact that Washington with his Continental Army laid in New Hanover Township, where Fagleysville is now located, on what was then the follow-

ing farms: The Philip Brandt farm of 250 A., the John Fagley farm of 150 A., the minister's or church farm of 100 A., where General Wayne had his headquarters, the Andrew Smith farm of 450 A. on which there was at that time a hotel, it is now Martin Wagner's farm. It was on these farms that the army relics were found by the different inhabitants, which were dropped there by those poorly clad soldiers, that had neither shoes nor clothing to wear.

On September 23d, General Washington writes to the President of Congress; "One thousand of my men are barefooted and have performed the long marches in that condition."

Frederick Fagley who is 82 years old and lives at 1619 North 19th street, Philadelphia, says his grandfather, John Fagley, who was a member of Captain Philip Hahn's company from New Hanover Township, used to tell him and his brothers Elias, John, and Noah the stories of the war. He used to say that he was at the Battle of the Brandywine and at Paoli, and after the retreat the army had their camp on his place, now Fagleysville. He used to point out where they killed the cattle under a big sprawly low-limb oak tree where they hung the cattle after they were killed. This oak tree stood down towards Michael Wagner's farm, near the Speck creek where the off-falls were dumped.

Mr. Fagley says when a boy he used to pick up the army relics on his grandfather's farm. He says he had found enough leaden musket balls and grape and canister balls and pieces of shell to fill an old straw bread basket full; they were mostly leaden musket balls. He presented the writer with one of the leaden musket balls, which I have placed in the Historical Society of Montgomery County, in connection with two other leaden musket balls found by Mr. William Moor of Fagleysville, which the writer procured from him.

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of the camp was located outside the Sanatoga Gorge, where the Jackson Hill school house now stands. The writer is of the opinion that the exact location was not to be known as they retired to this place to recuperate. It was at this camp that the army was replenished with shoes and clothing from the storehouses at Reading and Lancaster. The distance from New Hanover to Reading is twenty-four (24) miles.

At Skippackville on October 1st, Washington writes these words. "Our army has now had the rest and refreshment it stood in need of."

General Washington heads all his letters from the 21st of September, "Camp Pottsgrove." The last one was dated on September 26th, 1777.

"We are now in motion and advancing to form a junction with General McDougal. I expect to be joined in a day or two by General Foreman with fourteen or fifteen hundred Jersey Militia,"
Washington.

In this camp there was also located a bake house and oven built in it, as Sub-lieutenant William Antes bought brick and had them hauled to camp and paid for them on September 23d, 1777, sixty dollars (\$60.) It is my opinion that this bake house was located on the old Philip Brandt's farm southwest of Fagleysville.

Washington writes again September 26th, 1777, after arriving at Pennypacker's Mill, to William Henry, Lancaster, Pa., to authorize him to impress all blankets, shoes and stockings that can be spared by the inhabitants. This letter is headed Pennypacker's Mill.

The Orderly Book Note that mentions the camp at New Hanover, reads as follows: An advertisement which was issued while the army lay near Skippackville, Pa., to which place they moved on the 29th of September, 1777. Extract from General Weedon's Orderly Book on the 30th day of September, 1777,

"General Green lost at New Hanover camp, a brass pistol; both stock and barrel marked H... K... Any person who has found it and will return it to the General, shall receive twenty dollars."

This Orderly book note establishes the fact that both General Weedon and General Green were in this camp with their commands. This note was sent to me by my esteemed friend, the late Henry S. Dotterer.

The two notes cited, and the relics found at New Hanover, now Fagleysville, and the numerous statements made by old and respected citizens of the neighborhood should be sufficient proof that the camp was in New Hanover, now Fagleysville, Pa.

Camp Pottsgrove, Thursday, September 25th, 1777.

"To-day it rains; to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock we march and join General McDougall. Pretty soon I imagine we shall proceed to attack the enemy if their post is practicable."

To John Pickering.

Col. Pickering.

General McDougall with his command was in charge of the Skippack road at or near Pennypacker's Mill. Colonel Pickering's letter also shows that he had a good conception of the camp and its movements, and had charge of his command in the camp.

Camp Pottsgrove, Friday, September 26th, 1777.

"We shall move towards Philadelphia to-day, as the weather is clear and our reinforcements are at some distance below, ready to fall in with us."

To Henry Laurens.

John Laurens.

By the tone of this letter the army officers were already advised of the forward march to Philadelphia.

"In the Perkiomen Region, Past and Present," by the late Henry S. Dotterer, Vol. 3, No. 12, page 178, he says: "Washington at the home of Colonel Frederick Antes." When did this happen? On the night of the 20th of September, 1777, the army decamped and retraced its steps up to the Trappe. On the 21st of September he marched his troops to within four miles of Pottsgrove,

now Pottstown, and established Camp Pottsgrove. How long he remained here is not definitely known.

We are of the opinion that he was here from the night of the 21st to the morning of the 26th of September, 1777. He further says, in order to satisfy the inexorable demands of the historians, a half dozen words in a diary, a sentence in a letter, a note from an orderly book or something similar is necessary. I am sure we are now able to satisfy those wants of the historians, and that they will be convinced by the notes from Captain William Beatty's Journal and from General Weedon's Orderly Book, and the army relics that have been found, that Camp Pottsgrove was located at New Hanover, and that General Washington had his headquarters with Col. Frederick Antes, from the 21st to the 26th of September, 1777.

It is little known what this country owes to these patriotic men of the upper end of Montgomery County, at that time a portion of Philadelphia County. Such men as Colonel Thomas Potts, of Pottstown or Pottsgrove, as it was then called ; General Daniel Heister of Upper Salford Township, (Sunneystown, Pa.) later of Berks County ; Michael Hillengass, of Upper Hanover Township, who came to the assistance of the Colonial Government with \$100,000.00 in cash, after Philadelphia fell into the hands of the British making the Colonial Treasury helpless.

Colonel Frederick Antes, of Frederick Township, stood almost at the head in prominence. After the death of his father, Henry Antes, on the 20th of July, 1755, his son Frederick was appointed to succeed him by the King of England, as Justice of the Peace of Frederick Township, thus making it his business to look after the King's interests in that section of the province. But when the war broke out he took sides with the American cause ; he turned a rebel and left the Crown Government to fight their own battles. He was appointed one of the Delegates

to the Provincial Convention, which was held January 23d to 28th, 1775, at Carpenter's Hall, in Philadelphia. He again attended another convention along with others from the upper end on June 18th, 1776. The following are among the names subscribed thereto: Frederick Antes, Col. John Bull, and Capt. Matthew Brooke.

After these incidents he drew his sword in the American cause, and led the 6th Battalion of the Philadelphia County Militia, for which the Crown Government set a reward of £100 Sterling on his head, dead or alive. He lived on what is now known as the Isaac Bott's farm, in Frederick Township, Pa., where his father, Henry Antes, is buried. It will do anyone good to make a visit to his grave and read the inscription on his tombstone. About the year 1780, Colonel Frederick Antes was compelled to sell his mill and farm to his neighbor, Samuel Bertolet, in double haste on account of the British spies and detectives that were hunting him. During these trying times he was compelled to leave the neighborhood and go west into the wilds and wilderness of the Susquehanna river valley, where he afterward settled. Lately the writer has located one of his shoe buckles and a knee breeches buckle, and several army-coat buttons.

During the stay of the Continental Army at New Hanover, now Fagleysville, Pa., General Washington had his headquarters with Colonel Frederick Antes, and his bodyguard and the high officers had their headquarters and office with his neighbor, Samuel Bertolet, where the forward move was planned to attack the enemy near Philadelphia.

The late Henry S. Dotterer says in his "Perkiomen Region," that Frederick Antes was employed at the Warwick Furnace to superintend the casting of cannon during the two years, 1775 and 1776.



HOMESTEAD OF SAMUEL BERTOLET
THE REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER

Occupied by General Washington and his staff as their headquarters and
office during the encampment of Camp Pottsgrove,
September 18th to 26th, 1777.

During October, 1902, I had my cousin to call on me from Wyoming County, Pa. His name is Jacob Bertolet and he is eighty (80) years old. He is the son of Samuel Bertolet, who lived at the French Creek Mills, and who was the second son of Samuel Bertolet, the Revolutionary Soldier. Samuel, the father of Jacob, used to tell his family that his father, Samuel, (Jacob's grandfather) hauled stores and supplies to Valley Forge Camp during the cold winter in response to a personal appeal made by General Washington while stopping a few days with Colonel Frederick Antes on his second visit to the valley during the winter of 1777 and 1778.

THE SIXTH BATTALION
OF THE
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY MILITIA

In the Spring of 1777, when General Washington was compelled to change his field of operations from New Jersey into Pennsylvania, he opened his Summer campaign about April 1st, 1777. The Assembly was passing laws to strengthen the Continental Army with new recruits by forming the Militia into Battalions.

The Militia of Philadelphia County was organized into seven battalions, each battalion consisting of eight companies. The Colonels commanding the different battalions were: The first commanded by Daniel Hiester; the second by John Moor; the third by Benjamin McVeagh; the fourth by William Dean; the fifth by Robert Curry; the sixth by Frederick Antes; and the seventh by Isaac Warner.

On May 6th, 1777, Frederick Antes, of Frederick Township, Montgomery County, (then Philadelphia County, Pa) was appointed Colonel of the Sixth Battalion of the Philadelphia County Militia. It was composed of eight (8) companies from the following townships; Douglass, Frederick, Limerick, New Hanover, Upper Hanover, Marlborough, Perkiomen, and Salford.

Frederick Weiss was appointed Lieutenant Colonel.
Jacob Bishop was appointed Major.

William Antes, Esq. was appointed sub-lieutenant and paymaster.

The captains in command of the eight companies of the Sixth Battalion were : First company by John Brooke; the second company by Benjamin Brooke; third company by Peter Lower; fourth company by Philip Hahn; fifth company by Peter Richards; sixth company by Michael Dotterer; seventh company by Jacob Reed; and the eighth company by — Childs.

The militia were divided into eight classes and they consisted of all the men liable to military duty. Captain Michael Dotterer, of Frederick Township, received his commission as captain on May 12th, 1777, and served at the head of the Frederick Township Militia.

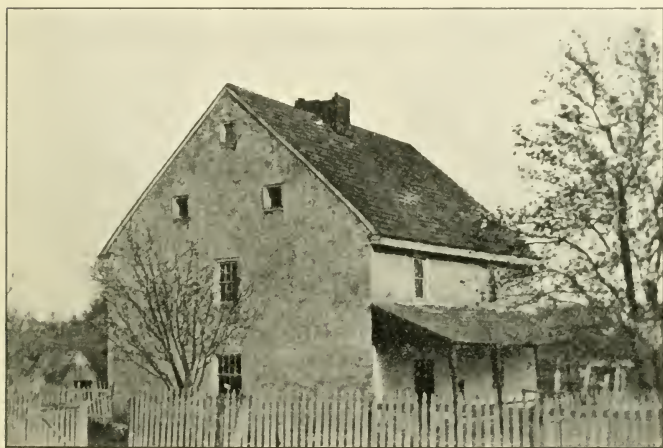
In those days the colonel of a regiment had full control and supervision of a militia regiment. The Colonial States were unable to supply the wants of the militia, therefore he appointed Samuel Bertolet to run the quartermaster's team. His team consisted of four (4) horses and a conestoga wagon with its feed trough swinging on the back of the wagon. The feed trough was so constructed that when in use it fitted on the wagon tongue. I well remember the trough, as my father, Daniel Bertolet, became the owner of it ; my father also became the owner of his army overcoat, which was in our family up to 1860. It was always said that two of the horses of Samuel Bertolet's army team belonged to Colonel Frederick Antes.

Colonel Frederick Antes and Samuel Bertolet lived as adjoining neighbors, the buildings being only 300 yards apart, and Captain Michael Dotterer lived one-half mile northeast of them

Colonel Frederick Antes' regiment after it was fully formed and organized, proceeded to Newtown, Bucks County, Pa., near Trenton on the western banks of the Delaware river. The regiment followed the army from this point to Philadelphia, where Washington established his

camp along Nicetown Lane at the Falls of Schuylkill, near what is known as ^{Queen's Hill} ~~Shawmont~~ Hill and where the Shawmont Reservoir is located.

From this point Washington's Army travelled to the Brandywine, where they fought the Battle of the Brandywine on the 11th of September, 1777. During the battle the militia had charge of the stores on the Chester Road, so said John Fagley, of New Hanover. That night the army retreated to Chester and the next day back to the old camp at the Falls of Schuylkill.



COL. FREDERICK ANTES' HOMESTEAD.

Where Gen. George Washington had his headquarters, Sept. 21 to 26, 1777.

Two days later the army moved to Buck Tavern and White Horse Tavern, where some of the militia had a clash with the English, September 16th, 1777. About this time the fall rainy season (fall equinox) set in and the army travelled from here to Chester Springs and Warwick Furnace to bury sixty (60) cannon that had been cast at the furnace that year.

While General Washington was making these manouvers and getting ready to recross the Schuylkill at Parker's Ford, General Wayne was detailed with a small detachment of regulars and a battalion of militia to guard the crossing of the main army over the Schuylkill, and on the 19th of September, after the main army had crossed the Schuylkill, General Wayne took upon himself to make a raid on the English Army. He started south and reached Paoli in the evening of the same day. That night General Grey made a dash upon his camp and early in the morning of the 20th of September, General Wayne was badly defeated and a number of his men massacred.

Samuel Bertolet's team was one of the teams that were in this engagement, and he with his team helped to haul the wounded soldiers to the Andrew Smith Hotel at New Hanover, where the amputating was performed on the bar-room table. Afterwards the old log Swamp Reformed Church was used as the hospital for the wounded. General Wayne's command also arrived in camp on the 20th of September, at New Hanover.

The following are the names of the men enrolled in Captain Michael Dotterer's Company of Militia from Frederick Township as found in the Pennsylvania Archives: Peter Acker, Francis Bart, Jacob Beltz, Samuel Bartley (Bertolet), Conrad Bickhard, Henry Boyer, Jacob Boyer, Philip Boyer, Valentine Boyer, William Boyer, Jacob Christman, Jacob Detweiler, Conrad Diffenbacher, Henry Hollobush, Yost Hollobush, Daniel Krause, Henry Krause, Michael Krause, Michael Kuntz, Francis Leidig, Leonard Leidig, John Lay, George Michael, Zacharias Nyce, Gottfried Saylor, Henry Sassaman, Charles Solner, Jacob Stetler, Henry Stetler, Christian Stetler, George Smith, George Swanck, Jacob Swanck, Jacob Reimer, Ludwig Reimer (Ludwick), John Reimer, Jacob Undercuffler, Henry Werner, Jeremiah Weiser, Jacob Zieber, and John Zieber.

INCIDENTS OF NEW HANOVER TOWNSHIP IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

This sketch relates to the names of the men enrolled in the New Hanover Company of the Sixth Battalion of the Philadelphia County Militia, and the statements of different persons who were born and raised in New Hanover as follows :

The statements of John Fagley, the Revolutionary soldier, are very interesting as handed down directly through his grandsons, three of whom are still living although very aged. Frederick Fagley and Elias Fagley have both passed the four score mark. These statements were told them by their grandfather while they were boys of proper age and good understanding, as Frederick says he was 14 years old when his grandfather died at the age of eighty-four (84) years, while Elias says he was 12 years old when his grandfather died. John Fagley and Noah Fagley, the other two grandsons follow their brothers closely in age, but John Fagley died a year ago. In my former statement I gave several facts of the statement of Frederick Fagley. He also says that his grandfather used to say that General Washington taught his army to read and to commit and to pray the 91st Psalm. He also remembers his grandfather when he used to mount his saddle horse and rode from his home at Fagleysville to New Hanover Square with his old army overcoat on, to cast his vote on election day. This overcoat was similar to the present army overcoat except it was made with three capes.

The following is a statement of Elias Fagley, of Philadelphia, Pa. : I well remember my grandfather and I remember him saying that he had been engaged at the Battle of the Brandywine and also at Paoli, and that Washington's Army was encamped on the different farms around Fagleysville.

Washington used to go over on the Prospect Hill from where he had a full and commanding view of the Sanatoga Valley to Pottsgrove ; and on the Fagley's Hill from where he had a full view of the Great Road to the Trappe and Valley Forge. It is at the foot of this hill that the gorge runs, through which was the door to the Falkner Swamp Valley and which is commonly known as the Schwanmer Tohr or (Swamp Door).

I also remember the big oak tree which my grandfather used to point out as being the place the army slaughtered their cattle and hung them on the low spreading limbs. We also had grandfather's wooden canteen which was made of sassafras wood ; it was so constructed that the height was three times the length. We also had grandfather's powder-horn in our family.

Statement of the late John S. Fagley, who lived on Chalkley Hall Lane, 25th Ward, Philadelphia. "I was about (8) years old when grandfather died, and I remember the sprawley oak tree beneath which the army slaughtered their cattle. I also remember the Revolutionary War relics which my brother Frederick found on our grandfather's farm, such as leaden bullets, broken bayonets and iron canister balls ; they laid in our garret for a long time. I helped to melt some of the leaden bullets to get the lead, which we wanted for other purposes. I well remember the old army overcoat and his powder-horn and wooden canteen that were stored away in the garret.

Grandfather used to relate a story that went the rounds in Fagleysville when I was a boy, to the effect

that when the artillery of Washington's Army came into camp along the road by the Philip Brandt Farm, one of the Brandt sons was plowing in the field and when he caught sight of the army he left his plough and team of horses stand in the field and joined the army."

Statement of Noah Fagley, of Fagleysville, Pa. "I was born on my grandfather's farm and I now own the Tannery farm and the farm on the Swamp Creek Hill



HEADQUARTERS OF GEN. ANTHONY WAYNE
while in command of the outpost in the Sanatoga Valley. Later the birth-
place of the late Gen. John F. Hartranft, Governor of
Pennsylvania, 1872 to 1878.

road. I have spent my lifetime on these three farms, and have found a number of war relics on them, such as leaden bullets, grape shot and pieces of broken shells. The old people used to say that the stone house on the Church farm was occupied by the Generals of Washington's Army, being the headquarters of Gen. Wayne."

The following are the names of the men that served under Captain Philip Hahn in the Militia Company from New Hanover Township, which was a part of the Sixth Battalion of the Philadelphia County Militia :

John Bitting, Peter Bitting, Yost Bitting, Philip Brandt, George Buchert, Peter Dehaven, Jacob Denny, John Detier, Michael Egolf; George Emhart, Ensign; John Fagley, Lewis Frankenberger, John Freed, Jacob Freese, Adam Gerver, John Grove, Bernard Freyer, John Freyer, Michael Hilber; Jacob Hill, Corporal; Michael Hoover; Jacob Kern, Corporal; Sebastian Koch, Adam Krebs, Philip Krebs, Michael Krebs, Davis Lessig, Peter Loch, Benjamin Markley, Joseph Maybury, Frederick Miller, Martin Miller, Benedict Mintz, Alexander McMichael, Adam Neidig, Jacob Neighman, George Palsgrove, Henry Palsgrove, Daniel Pile, Sebastian Reifsnider, Daniel Rhoads, John Richards, John Sackman, Christian Sackriter; George Sheffy, Corporal; Jacob Sheffy, John Sheffy, John Shuler, Christian Slonaker, George Adam Slonaker, Henry Slonaker, John Smith, Henry Snider, Jr., Jacob Snider, John Snider, Ludwig Stark, Jacob Strouse, Adam Warthman, John Walter, John Willower, Philip Yawn, Adam Yerger, Andrew Yerger, Martin Yerger, Philip Young, and Chistian Zoller.

The writer finds that a number of the men whose names are mentioned in these companies were promoted and a few occupied very prominent positions during the Revolutionary War.

In the year 1782, Colonel Daniel Hiester was promoted to the grade of Brigadier General by the Executive Council on May 23d. Captian Jacob Reed was appointed Major in the same year and served during the war. He was born in Franconia Township, one mile west of Hatfield, Pa., and died in New Britian Township, Bucks Co., Pa., and is buried at Leidy Church. A granite monu-

ment was erected in 1902 to honor his name and mark his grave.

I find Captain Benjamin Markley in command of a company from New Hanover Township in the year 1781. I also find among the old records of 1781, a receipt of his which reads as follows :

Received, January 31st, 1781. of Peter Richards, one of the Sub-lieutenants of the County of Philadelphia, the sum of six hundred dollars in full, for the drum and fife of my company for the summer last past, and one hundred dollars for two days service in notifying the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th classes of militia in my company.

Pr. me, Benjamin Markley, Capt.





ADDENDA

The object of publishing this pamphlet is for two reasons.

FIRST.—To give the exact location of Camp Pottsgrove to the present and the future generations, as its location has for years been a bone of contention among the historians.

SECOND.—To place the spelling of Samuel Bertolet's name correctly in history and the services he rendered to his country during the Revolutionary War. You will perceive under the enrolment of Captain Michael Dotterer's Company from Frederick Township, in the Pennsylvania Archives, his name is there enroled as Samuel Bartley. To this day the Bertolets are known by that name in Berks and Montgomery Counties, which comes under the French Huguenot pronunciation, thus : Bār-to-lā ; the e takes the sound of a and the t being silent.



